

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03780 051504Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 /078 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1629
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3780

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, SHUM, RH, MZ

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: REPORT OF ZANU "ESCAPEES"

1. A PRESS REPORT OF JULY 5, FROM SALISBURY STATES THAT FIFTEEN ZANU CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS FLED FRELIMO CUSTODY AND ARE AT PRESENT IN SWAZILAND. THE REPORT, FILED BY ANTHONY RIDER, INDICATED THAT THE ESCAPE TOOK PLACE SOME DAYS AGO. THE MEN WERE REPORTED TO INCLUDE ZANLA COMMANDER "GENERAL" JOSEPH CHIMURENGA; RUGARE GUMBO, ZANU PUBLICITY SECRETARY; HENRY HAMIDZIRIPI, MANPOWER SECRETARY; JOSEPH TADARERA, POLITICAL COMMISSAR FOR ZANLA; AND MUKUDZEI MUDZI, KUMBIRAYI KANGAYI, CRISPIN MANDIZVIDZA, AND CHARLES DAURAMANZI.

2. THE ACCOUNT GOES ON TO REPORT THAT THE FIFTEEN MAY SEEK ASYLUM
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 03780 051504Z

IN RHODESIA OR BRITAIN. IT QUOTES INTERIM GOVERNMENT SOURCES AS SAYING THEY ARE CONFIDENT THE MEN WILL COME TO RHODESIA. IT ALSO REPORTS THAT SITHOLE'S SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NOEL MUKONO, HAS VISITED PRETORIA AND SWAZILAND IN THE PAST FIVE DAYS TRYING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM.

3. RIDER COMMENTS THAT THE ZANU ESCAPEES HAD BEEN TRYING FOR CLOSER POLITICAL ASSOCIATION WITH NKOMO, WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR THEIR ARRESTS. HE SPECULATES THAT THEIR ESCAPE COULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IF THEY DECIDE TO COME IN.

4. COMMENT: AT PRESENT, WE HAVE NO WAY TO CONFIRM THE REPORTED "ESCAPE". IF TRUE, IT COULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT EFFECT ON THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN RHODESIA. SHOULD THEY HAVE TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, IT WOULD BE A MAJOR BOOST TO THE SALISBURY GROUP'S IMAGE. IF THE DEFECTORS STAY OUT AS A "THIRD FORCE" OR PERHAPS AFFILIATE WITH NKOMO, THEY COULD TARNISH THE IMAGE OF MUGABE AND CAUSE FURTHER TRAUMA FOR THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ALLIANCE. IN ANY CASE, THEIR ALLEGED WILLINGNESS IN THE PAST TO WORK WITH NKOMO WILL HEIGHTEN RHODESIAN AND POSSIBLY SOUTH AFRICAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHANCES OF NKOMO COMING TO TERMS WITH THE INTERNAL PARTIES.
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